

*Washington, DC* – Today, U.S. Rep. John Hall (D-NY19), Chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, blasted President Bush's threat to veto Congress's GI Bill for the 21st Century. The GI Bill is supported by major veterans organizations and by bipartisan majorities in both the House and the Senate.

"The President's threat to deny American troops improved education benefits is disgraceful," said Congressman Hall. "This is yet another example of the President's policy toward our military – quick to send troops in to battle and demand more and more sacrifices from them, but slow to provide them with the benefits they've earned and deserve."

The new GI Bill expands the education benefits for veterans who have served since September 11, 2001 and restores the promise of a full, four-year public college education. Currently, GI educational benefits pay only about 60 percent of a public college education and 30 percent of a private college education.

"This 21st Century GI Bill, like the original GI Bill did after World War II, is going to give veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan the tools needed to succeed after military service and is also going to help strengthen American economic recovery," said Hall.

The original GI Bill returned \$7 to the economy for every \$1 spent on it, and the first two years of the new GI Bill would cost what the U.S. is spending every two days in Iraq. "This legislation does much to ensure that veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars get the education and support they have earned through their service," said Congressman Hall.

"President Bush should show a commitment to honoring the men and women he asks so much of and sign the GI bill for the 21st Century."

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